

Hope is the Thing With Feathers

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Hope is the Thing With Feathers

by [FrenchKey](#)

Summary

'I'm a Witcher,' he said, 'I can hear a mouse fart at the other end of the Keep, but what use is that if I can't see it to kill it? What good is a Witcher without his eyes?'

In the aftermath of a terrible injury, Warritt learns to hope again.

Notes

Hope you enjoy the lesser known Witchers. Thank you to the two lovely folk who beta'd this!

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

He relaxed back into the hard wooden bench and tipped his head. The sun warmed his skin and a light breeze flicked the ends of his hair. He could hear the birds chirping and the leaves rustling and the slow, steady breathing of his companion. The sun warmed grass smelled green and springlike below the more obvious scents of the flowers surrounding them. He'd never noticed the smell of the grass before. It had been too subtle for him to pick up before, under all the other scents of the world.

His bones ached. Despite the warmth of the day, he felt chilled and he pulled his blanket tighter around his shoulders. He heard the slight indrawing of breath before Gerring spoke and he braced himself.

'You'll learn to work around it,' he said, voice as low and gruff as it always had been. In that moment, Warritt couldn't decide whether to laugh or cry. His friend never changed, always looking at the practical.

'I'm a Witcher,' he said, 'I can hear a mouse fart at the other end of the Keep, but what use is that if I can't see it to kill it? What good is a Witcher without his eyes?'

If they had still been able to, he had no doubt that his eyes would have been filling with hot, angry tears. He knew the rumours, that Witchers couldn't cry, the mutations burning that ability out of them along with their emotions. It was bullshit. It was all bullshit. Except, it was true for him now. The attack that had taken his sight had also taken the physical structures of his eyes. He couldn't cry without tear ducts. It didn't mean he didn't want to though.

The gentle warmth of the sun was harsher on the scarred expanse of his face. He'd healed enough to take the bandages off last week and the last of the wounds had finally closed over the day before. The infirmary master had given him permission to get some fresh air and light, believing it would do him good. Some good it was doing. He could hear and smell exactly what he was missing.

In his mind's eye he conjured up an image of the garden as he had seen it last. It had been the very end of winter when he left. There had still been a light dusting of frost sparkling on the ground. The bench he sat on now had been surrounded by an empty bed where flowers would grow in the spring. The bushes and trees were leafless and brown. He'd expected to be back in a week or less. He should have been here to watch the shoots push up through the soil and unfurl towards the same sun that was making his scars itch. He should have been here. He should have been able to see it.

He listened to a bumblebee flitting around, collecting pollen to take back to the hive. He envied it in that moment, its carefree flight, concerned only about one thing. It didn't need to worry about being drugged and ambushed, tied up and tortured for information it didn't even have. It didn't need to try to move on with its life after the very foundations had been irrevocably cracked. He did. What kind of Witcher was a Witcher without eyes after all?

'What am I if I'm not a Witcher, Ger?' he asked.

Gerring's sigh ruffled the short cropped hair above his ear. He supposed at least the hair would grow back.

'You could be anything you wanted,' Gerring said, patient as he always had been with Warritt, ever since they were boys training together, 'but it doesn't matter because you are a Witcher.'

'Whoever heard of a blind Witcher?' Warritt spat.

'Whoever heard of a one armed Witcher?' Gerring countered, 'And yet, Oso of the Bears makes his living walking the Path, same as the rest of us.'

'He can at least see what he's aiming at,' Warritt grumbled.

'And you can wield a sword and a sign together, something that is now beyond him. Stop feeling sorry for yourself, War and start thinking like the boy who dragged us both kicking and screaming through our training and our trials because he wouldn't give up even when he should have. You kicked my arse then. It's my turn now.'

'I hate you so much right now,' Warritt sighed, not meaning a word of it.

Gerring laughed at him and knocked their elbows together. They lapsed into silence for a while, letting the breeze play across their faces. Warritt thought about what Gerring had said. He thought about Oso who he'd met once in a tavern on the Path. He'd been a jovial fellow, despite missing his entire left arm. 'Your signs are your life,' the instructors used to say, 'They can take your swords, but they can't take your power.' Yet, that's exactly what the monster had done to Oso. To hear his instructors tell it, he'd be a lesser Witcher for it, in constant danger and little better than a liability on the Path. But Gerring was right. Oso was still a highly effective Witcher with decades of experience behind him. Warritt wasn't exactly a spring chicken himself, either. He had experience, training. He could swing a sword and *know* that it would hit where he aimed. Surely, all of that wasn't useless now?

He listened to the wind and felt how it trickled across his face and body, eddying where his form interrupted it. A bird fluttered down to land in the big tree by the door.

'Gerring,' he said suddenly, 'You know those bats they have in Sodden? The bloody big ones that'll come straight for your face?'

'Yeah, I know the ones. Spooky fuckers. What about them?'

'Well, they're blind aren't they? But they never hit you. Always spin out the way at the last minute. How do they do it?'

'I think they use sound. What's your point, War?'

'I think I have an idea,' Warrior said, pushing himself sharply to his feet, 'Take me to the library?'

'Come on then. You can explain on the way,' Gerring said, taking his elbow and guiding him back towards the keep. The bird chirped and lifted off its branch. Warritt listened to its

feathers rustle and, for the first time in weeks, felt hope stirring in his chest.

End Notes

Let me know what you thought? Comments and kudos are love <3

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